

REMARKS

Claims 7-19 are pending, claims 7, 8, and 10-18 are amended, claims 1-6 and 20-26 having been withdrawn from consideration pursuant to Applicants' Response to Requirement for Restriction filed October 2, 2003. The Specification is amended to address informalities alluded to in the Office Action mailed December 15, 2003. No new matter is submitted. Accordingly, entry of the amendment and reconsideration of this application, as amended is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication in the Office Action of claims 11 and 15-17 as containing allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Because Applicants believe the invention is patentably distinct as recited in amended claims 7-19, for at least the reasons cited herein, claims 11 and 15-17 remain in dependent form.

In item 1 of the Office Action, Applicants' election of Group III is acknowledged. Applicants confirm that the election of Group III is drawn to claims 7-19 as set forth in Applicants' Response to Requirement for Restriction filed October 2, 2003.

In item 2 of the Office Action, the Specification is objected to for alleged inconsistencies with respect to the "pre-curing area 110" and the "curing area 112" at page 5, line 18 and with respect to the "end portion 150" at page 5, line 20. As no reference to the "pre-curing area 110" or the "curing area 112" occurs at page 5, line 18 or to the "end portion 150" at page 5, line 20, Applicants presume the objection pertains to the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 9. Applicants' have amended the specification by replacing the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 9 to address the inconsistencies therein. Accordingly, Applicants' respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the specification.

In item 3 of the Office Action claims 10 and 12 are objected to because they depend on claim 2, a non-elected claim. Claims 10 and 12 are amended to depend from claim 8, to obviate the objections thereto. Accordingly, Applicants' respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to claims 10 and 12.

In item 4 of the Office Action, claims 7-10, 12-14 and 18-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,965,172 to Wang et al. (hereinafter "Wang"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

To maintain a 35 U.S.C. 102(b) rejection, a reference must teach each and every feature of a claimed invention. Wang does not do so.

Applicants' invention comprises an article handling apparatus for moving contact lens carriers around a defined area comprising, *inter alia*, a first set of article handling devices and a second set of article handling devices, wherein the first set of article handling devices include a first assembly for assembling a group of lens carriers in a row in a first position, a second assembly for moving the row of lens carriers from the first position and into the pre-cure area, a third assembly for moving the row of lens carriers across the pre-cure area and into a final position therein, and a fourth assembly for moving the row of lens carriers from the final position and out of the pre-cure area. The second set of article handling devices move the lens carriers about the curing area, which includes an intelligent buffer for accumulating and discharging cured lenses according to variable processing conditions.

Wang, on the other hand, as shown in Fig. 1, discloses a pallet system 10 comprising an injection mold assembly 20 for manufacturing contact lens thermoplastic front curve mold halves and an injection mold assembly 30 for manufacturing contact lens thermoplastic back curve mold portions. The front curve injection mold assembly 20 includes an apparatus 22 (alleged to

teach the first assembly) for transporting up to eight front curve mold portions at a time from the injection mold assembly 20 to a pallet 12a positioned adjacent a first pallet conveyor 27. The back curve injection mold assembly 30 includes an apparatus 24 (also alleged to teach the first assembly) for transporting up to eight back curve mold portions at a time within a pallet 12b positioned adjacent to a second pallet conveyor 29.

A sequencing apparatus 40 (alleged to teach the second assembly) is for situating a pallet 12a adjacent a pallet 12b and onto a sequenced pallet conveyor 32. The adjacent pallets 12a & 12b are alternately deposited from the conveyor and into a filling/mold station while 50 where the pallets 12a & 12b are oriented and assembled as a lens mold by a separate apparatus 59 within the filling/mold assembly station 50. The pallets 12a & 12b comprising completed mold assemblies then exit the filling/mold assembly stations 50 and are conveyed along conveyor 32c (alleged to teach the third assembly) to a precure chamber 65 where the monomer solution contained in each mold assembly is partially cured into a viscous or soft gel-like state. After exiting the precure chamber 65, the pallets containing the precured lenses are transported from conveyor 32c to split conveyors 31a and 31b to ensure longer residence time in a polymerization chamber 75 (col. 6, lines 41-49). The lenses contained in the individual mold assemblies are then fully polymerized in UV light ovens in the polymerization chamber 75 to form the contact lens blank.

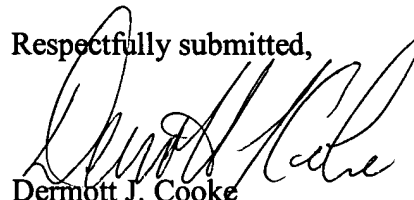
The elements of Wang, alleged to teach the four assemblies of the present invention are for moving the contact lens carriers from the injection mold assembly, to the pallets, to the conveyor belt, and to the precure chamber, before orienting and assembling the lens carriers or molds. Thereafter, the lenses are partially cured and delivered to the polymerization chamber for further curing. Wang thus fails to teach four **separate** assemblies for forming a first array of lens

carriers and moving the lens carriers into, through and out of the pre-cure area, and fails to teach the intelligent buffer in the curing area to accommodate variable processing conditions as recited in independent claim 7, from which all remaining pending claims directly or indirectly depend.

Accordingly, as Wang fails to teach each and every feature of the claimed invention as discussed above, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection of claims 7-10, 12-14 and 18-19 in this Application. Applicants therefore further respectfully request allowance of claims 7-19 in view of the amendments and remarks discussed herein.

If the Examiner believes that anything further is desirable to place this application in even better form for allowance, or if the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' representative would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



Dermott J. Cooke
Reg. No. 41,685

SCULLY, SCOTT, MURPHY & PRESSER
400 Garden City Plaza
Garden City, New York 11530
Telephone: (516) 742-4343
FSD/DJC/AVS:ej